

REGULAR MEETING OF THE JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL JANUARY 16, 2018

The Jasper County Council met this date at 7:00 P.M. C.S.T. in the Commissioners Room, Suite 202, of the Jasper County Courthouse located at 115 West Washington Street, Rensselaer, Indiana, with the following members present: Rein Bontreger, Stephen Jordan, Gerrit H. DeVries, Andrew Andree, Gary Fritts, Paul Norwine and Brett Risner. Also present was Deputy Auditor Tina Porter. Mr. Bontreger called the meeting to order and those present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mr. Risner.

REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD: Mr. Risner made a motion to open nominations. Mr. Fritts seconded the motion to open nominations and the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Norwine made a motion to nominate Rein Bontreger as President. Mr. DeVries seconded the nomination. No other nominations were made. Mr. Jordan made a motion to close nominations and Mr. DeVries seconded. After a unanimous vote, nominations were closed. Also unanimous was the vote to elect Mr. Bontreger as President of the Jasper County Council.

Mr. Norwine made a motion to open nominations for Council Vice President. Mr. Fritts seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Risner made a motion to nominate Andrew Andree and Mr. DeVries seconded. Mr. Fritts made a motion to close nominations. Mr. Jordan seconded and the motion carried unanimously. After a unanimous vote, Mr. Andree was elected Vice President of the Jasper County Council.

MINUTES: Mr. DeVries made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 19, 2017 Joint Session, as presented. Mr. Risner seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Andree made a motion to approve the minutes from the Regular December 19, 2017 meeting, as presented. Mr. Jordan seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

NIPSCO / SAMEER GHAZNAVI / CHAPMAN & CUTLER / RESOLUTION FOR SERIES 1994C BONDS / SECOND AMENDMENT TO FINANCING AGREEMENT: Mr. Ghaznavi was present representing NIPSCO, joined by the Vice President of the Council of NiSource, the parent company of NIPSCO. They requested approval of a second amendment to a financing agreement related to bonds that the County issued in 1994. When the County issued the bonds, Chapman and Cutler acted as the bond counsel. The funds of the bonds were loaned to NIPSCO. Some of the bonds are still outstanding in the amount of \$4,000,000.00. Mr. Ghaznavi explained that, in order to amend the financing agreement, they would need Council approval, consent of the bond insurer and consent of the Trustee. They've received consent from the bond insurer and have been told by the Trustee that the Trustee will also provide consent. Mr. Bontreger asked Mr. Ghaznavi to highlight the changes. Mr. Ghaznavi replied that they essentially want to amend the financing agreement so it's clear that NIPSCO can convert from a corporation to a limited liability company. He requested that the Council sign the Resolution and the Second Amendment would be presented to the Commissioners for their approval and signatures. Mr. DeVries asked if the Council's attorney has reviewed it. Attorney Monfort stated that he and Attorney Beaver looked it over and did not see a significant material change. If the Council is inclined to approve it, it would still be subject to the Commissioners approval. Mr. Jordan made a motion to approve the Second Amendment Resolution, as presented, pending Commissioners approval. Mr. Risner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION / COURTHOUSE, BUILDINGS, GROUNDS & REPAIR / ENERGY SAVINGS PROJECT: Mr. Culp was present and stated that both additional are out of CUM Cap Development. The Commissioners chose Honeywell to do the work at the Courthouse and the Annex and Trane will be doing the work at Community Corrections.

He then informed the Council that Auditor Grow spoke with Umbaugh who advised that Rainy Day would be the best place to take money from for a project; although Mr. Culp stated that he's not an advocate of that as he would like to protect that fund as much as possible. Prior to speaking with Umbaugh, the additional were advertised for. There is \$225,000.00 in Energy Savings from the 2017 budget that was not used. He requested approval for both additional, but told the Council he's unsure it will be spent as he would like to speak more in depth with Umbaugh and the Council about using the Rainy Day Fund. If that's the best long term approach, they may go that route instead. He said the Commissioners would like to continue discussions with the Council about what the best funding is for the future.

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ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION / COURTHOUSE, BUILDINGS, GROUNDS & REPAIR / ENERGY SAVINGS PROJECT CONT'D: Mr. Culp stated that the County is on borrowed time with the equipment we currently have. He told the Council about how the lobby got down to thirty-seven degrees the morning of the last Commissioners meeting. That same day, the Commissioners received a call from Mr. Carney who stated that the bearings had gone out in the boiler at the Annex and because the parts can no longer be ordered, they would have to be specially made. Over the summer, Honeywell found problems with the chiller that's located outside Mrs. Scheurich's office. Mr. Culp's suggestion is to complete the work at Community Corrections immediately and pay for it out of cash dollars that the County currently has. There was another \$225,000.00 appropriated in the 2018 budget for Energy Savings. Mr. Culp stated that the Commissioners interviewed Trane and Honeywell at their most recent Executive Session and were very impressed with both companies. Trane did a walk-through at the jail and gave the County some ideas that have never been presented by any vendor previously and he said he thinks they were pretty intrigued with the information presented to them regarding long term cost savings and utility bills. The County is currently under contract with Emcore (Havel), but the County has encountered a lot of issues with them. Mr. Bontreger mentioned that the Commissioners have previously come to the Council about re-appropriating money from last year that was not spent.

Mr. Risner made a motion to approve the additional request that was advertised in Cumulative Capital Development Capital Outlays Courthouse Energy Savings Project Fund in the amount of \$225,000.00. Mr. Andree seconded and the motion carried unanimously. **Ordinance Number 2018-01A**

Mr. Fritts made a motion to approve the additional request that was advertised in the Cumulative Capital Development Other Services and Charges Courthouse, Buildings, Grounds and Repairs Fund in the amount of \$245,000.00. Mr. DeVries seconded and the motion carried unanimously. **Ordinance Number 2018-01B**

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION / RECORDER PERPETUATION FUND: Advertised in the Records Records Perpetuation Supplies Office Supplies was \$20,000.00. This is for Fidler's maintenance fee. The Perpetuation Fund is money that is generated from fees the Recorder charges. Mr. Norwine made a motion to approve the request. Mr. Jordan seconded and the motion carried unanimously. **Ordinance Number 2018-01C**

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION / SHERIFF SALARY: Advertised in LOIT Public Safety County Share Elected Official Salary was \$3,482.00. Mr. Bontreger explained that the request is for \$2,732.00 because the Council had already given a \$750.00 raise. Mr. Fritts made a motion to approve the request in the amount of \$2,732.00. Mr. Risner seconded and the motion carried unanimously. **Ordinance Number 2018-01D**

SALARY ORDINANCE AMENDMENT: Mr. Bontreger stated that the Salary Ordinance had previously been approved. This amendment is changing the Part-time Nurse's salary from \$22.93 to \$23.29. Mr. DeVries made the motion to approve the amendment from \$22.93 to \$23.29. Mr. Norwine seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

INTER-FUND LOAN: Mr. Bontreger read the title of the Inter-Fund Resolution aloud. He said it is a loan to the Ambulance Fund in the amount of \$350,000.00 in order for ambulance service to be up and running and it's always paid back by December 31st. Mr. Risner made a motion to approve the Inter-Fund loan from Fund 1186 to Fund 1151. Mr. Andree seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

ORVILLE PERRY: Mr. DeVries mentioned that he heard Mr. Perry is ill. Mr. DeVries asked that the Council keep him in their prayers. Chief Deputy Williamson shared some information he received from Mr. Perry's daughter.

COMBINING OF TOWNSHIPS: Mr. Risner stated that he saw a broadcast on Channel 18 that the State is considering combining townships and eliminating trustees. Mr. Culp replied that it's House Bill 1005. There was a hearing earlier in the day in the House. They did not take a vote, but plan to vote on January 23, 2018.

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COMBINING OF TOWNSHIPS CONT'D: Mr. Culp further stated that Jasper County has thirteen townships; seven of which could lose their identity which are Newton, Jordan, Milroy, Hanging Grove, Barkley, Gillam and Kankakee. The threshold is solely based on population and any township under twelve hundred would have to merge with a larger township. He said Hanging Grove, Milroy and Jordan, which are contiguous, are still under twelve hundred. There is concern with school districts and tax revenue, voting precincts, school board appointments, poor relief rates and fire protection if this were to pass. Most trustees make a couple hundred dollars per year so he said he doesn't see how it's going to save much money, but it will definitely have an effect on county government. There will possibly be three-hundred trustees throughout the State that could lose their positions. Each township has three board members and one trustee. Barkley, for example, has a population of nine-hundred. If they were to merge with Hanging Grove, the whole geographical area would become Barkley because they would be the largest surviving township. It may force counties to go to voting centers. Mr. Bontreger asked where this started and Mr. Culp replied that he heard it began with the Indiana Chamber. The Township Association testified that they support this move. Mr. Jordan stated that he heard there's a bill that would then put the responsibility of taking care of the cemeteries on the County. Mr. Jordan asked if this addresses the townships that have surplus money. Mr. Culp replied that he remembers at one time Carpenter had been saving money to pay cash for a new fire truck as opposed to loaning the money for it and when the State took a snapshot of years eight and ten of savings, they said their tax rate was too high. In response to Mr. DeVries' question about who would be responsible for making the decision, Mr. Culp replied that the townships will be. If they do not do it, DLGF will then make the decision.

COUNTY HEALTH INSURANCE: Mr. DeVries asked Chief Deputy Williamson if anything has transpired since Sheriff Risner spoke at the last Council meeting. Mr. DeVries stated that he felt like the blame was partly placed on the Council and that there was also discussion about an Insurance Committee. He then explained that the health insurance affects the Council when it comes to Officers leaving employment; however, the Council has no say in the selection of the plan. Chief Williamson replied that he heard there was a committee that was enacted twenty years ago that would go over the insurance. He had asked the Sheriff if he could look in to the possibility of a committee being formed again. He explained that, for some people, insurance is hard to understand and if nothing more, this committee might help them understand what's going on. Chief Williamson said that, although there were reactions from some employees that they were quitting, no one has quit yet. Mr. Culp stated that the Commissioners have talked about the committee. He further stated that there's more employees affected than just those in the Sheriff's Department. What brought about the steep increase were the budget numbers. The Commissioners present the Council with a budget number. The Council then either approves or decreases the number. The health insurance came in higher due to the number of claims since we are self-insured. Mr. Culp explained that, in the past, the increases have been absorbed by the County and the County is no longer able to absorb those costs. The Commissioners felt that they needed to stay as close to the budgeted number as they could. He said he'd like a survey to be done of all employees. Mr. Dan Fagen is going to try to formulate a questionnaire. Mr. Culp said he likes the idea of giving the employees a couple different plans to choose from. He further stated that the County can make this a cheaper plan but the coverage is not going to be as good as it is now. Mr. Bontreger stated that he thinks the survey is a good idea. There are four tiers and the family plan took the biggest rate increase. Mr. Bontreger and Mr. Culp both said that, after the article ran in the paper about the health insurance increase, they had citizens call and tell them that they are paying much more than that for a family plan. Mr. Culp said he heard from someone that's paying between \$2,000 and \$3,000 per month on a self-insured plan. He then stated that the projections will be out in July and the Commissioners will receive the renewal rates in November. Mr. Culp stated that the Commissioners need to look at their focus, whether it be focusing on insuring the employee or the whole family. Mr. Maxwell and Mr. Culp mentioned the other benefits employees receive such as PERF, life insurance and thirteen paid holidays that they hope the employees will take in to consideration as well. Mr. DeVries thanked Mr. Culp and Mr. Maxwell for the explanation on the health insurance. He said that it would hurt the County to lose Officers; however, he did not want to be blamed for a decision he had no part in.

INDIAN TRAILS: Mr. DeVries asked what the decision was regarding the request from Indian Trails. Mr. Culp replied that the Commissioners told Mr. Stradling no.

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INDIAN TRAILS CONT'D: The time had lapsed to receive the match money. Another deciding factor is that Kankakee Valley is not involved with Indian Trails. They told Mr. Stradling he could come back next year with another request if he'd like. Mr. Norwine said that a \$100,000.00 request seems extreme, but maybe after a year or two, he could understand the County considering donating \$10,000.00 if it were to be a match guarantee. Mr. Culp suggested in the future giving \$10,000.00 to Indian Trails and \$10,000.00 to the cooperative that Kankakee Valley belongs to.

CHIEF DEPUTY WILLIAMSON / COMMISSARY FUND REPORT / JAIL REPORT: On behalf of Sheriff Risner, Chief Deputy Williamson gave the Council the Commissary Fund Report and the yearly Jail Report.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION: Mr. Jordan stated that he attended the Downtown Revitalization meeting this evening. They provided some nice pictures of the Courthouse and parking lot area. There is a lot of effort being put in to it and it was a well-attended meeting. Mr. Bontreger mentioned that he noticed the concrete slab has been removed from the site of the old Johnny Rusk building. Mr. Maxwell stated that he will be meeting with Mr. Pickering to discuss with him what the County has planned for the space.

There being no public comment and no further business, Mr. Fritts made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Jordan seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Rein O. Bontreger, President

ATTEST:

Kimberly K. Grow, Auditor of Jasper County